

# The MILLINI



A publication from  
**THE FIGHTING ILLINI ARMY ROTC**

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Department of Military Science

# THE STORE

Fighting Illini Battalion Hoodie: \$37



Battalion Polo Unisex/Ladies Cut: \$35



Ranger Buddy Hoodie: \$35



The Fighting Illini Battalion store has been updated with some of the cadet designs from the past year. If you are interested in purchasing any of these items, fill out an order form at the following website: [https://stores.inksoft.com/army\\_rotc/shop/home](https://stores.inksoft.com/army_rotc/shop/home). You will pay and receive your order straight from the vendor. Also, we often have alumni that see in the MILLINI shirts the cadets are wearing for training and ask to purchase one of these shirts. Some of these MILLINI shirts the cadets are wearing for training and ask to purchase one of these shirts. If you have other ideas you wish to wear to display your pride in the Fighting Illini Battalion, please send them to us at [arotc@illinois.edu](mailto:arotc@illinois.edu).

*\*\* Photos on Cover top left to bottom right: Cadet Cullen O'Connor at Air Assault School, Cadet Cordelia Grob attends CCWP, Cadet Tyler Igunbor attends CTLT, Push-up Crew getting ready for another season of football.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Inside this issue:

The Store	2
Message from the Professor of Military Science	4
Message from the Senior Military instructor	5
Participating in Cadet Troop Leadership Training	6
Basic Camp Training Highlights	7
Fighting Illini Cadets Conquer Advanced Camp	8-9
The Cadet Coalition Warfighter Program	10-14
Air Assault School	15-17
Army Science Board Internship	18
Army Mountain Warfare School	19
Fall Preview	20
Request for Support from Alumni	21
Upcoming Events and Transitions	22
Cadre Contact Information	23

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## Message from the Professor of Military Science

*By MAJ Daniel Johnson*



Welcome back to the Fighting Illini Battalion. This was an extremely busy and successful summer for our Cadre and Cadets. Many of the Battalion's Cadets spent their entire summer taking advantage of opportunities to develop themselves as leaders. Their summer experiences will only enhance the Army ROTC program throughout this school year. The Fighting Illini Battalion had 23 Cadets graduate from Advanced Camp at Fort Knox. For this past summer, Advanced Camp was a 37-day rigorous exercise that tested and evaluated Cadets in a variety of leadership positions in both garrison and in the field operations. All Cadets did well in Advanced Camp, but I would like to specifically recognize Cadet Cullen O'Connor and Cadet Austin Kim who both earned the RECONDO Badge. Only a handful of the thousand Cadets who attend Advanced Camp each year achieve RECONDO standards, which makes Cadets O'Conner's and Kim's achievement impressive. Additionally, Cadet Molly Hein earned the First Command Financial Services Knife, which is awarded to the Cadet in Advanced Camp who demonstrated leadership that encourages teamwork, unit cohesion, and reinforces mission accomplishment. The Fighting Illini Battalion also had five Cadets graduate from the Basic Camp at Fort Knox. Those five Cadets experienced a grueling training cycle, but each came away with the confidence and raw skills to continue their journey towards becoming an US Army officer.

In addition to the Cadet training at Fort Knox, the Fighting Illini Battalion had 15 Cadets participate in the US Army's Cadet Coalition Warfighter Program (CCWP). The Cadets spent about three weeks abroad immersed in a partnered nation's culture. While in CCWP, Cadets experienced a host nation military-to-military exchange, supported humanitarian service, and were educated on the social, cultural and historical aspects of the country. Two Cadets also contributed to the missions of our Active Duty brethren by taking advantage of Cadet Troop Leader Training (CTLT) in Fort Lewis and Germany. Congratulations also to Cadets Cullen O'Connor and Cadets Jack Hamman for graduating the US Army's Air Assault School at Fort Campbell and Cadet Thomas Easton who graduated from the US Army's Mountain Warfare School in Vermont. The Fighting Illini Battalion started the school year off with the Cadet Orientation Program (COP) where senior Cadets greeted over 40 new freshman Cadets. The senior Cadets spent several days educating and training their freshman teammates on a variety of military topics and assisted many of them with campus related actions. Overall, COP was a huge success.

With regards to joining the team, we recently welcomed MSG Tim Collier as the new Senior Military Instructor (SMI). MSG Collier's arrived from a Battery First Sergeant position in Germany. We are excited to have MSG Collier and he has already accomplished a great deal in his short time within the Battalion. Finally, I would like to thank all the alumni and friends of the Fighting Illini Battalion. The Cadets and Cadre truly appreciate your commitment and dedication to the Army ROTC program.



**ILLINI!**



## Message from the Senior Military Instructor

*By MSG Timothy Collier*

Good tidings to the Fighting Illini Army ROTC Battalion and its Alumni. I am honored and humbled to serve as the next Senior Military Science Instructor at this Battalion, the “West Point of the West.” I reported to the University on August 5, 2019. My last assignment was with the Field Artillery Squadron, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Regiment in Vilseck, Germany. I served there as the Squadron Fire Control NCO for two years and the Bulldog Battery First Sergeant for two years.

I arrived here full of energy and excited about the opportunity to shape future leaders in our Army. I am happy to report that nothing I have seen or experienced thus far has done anything to dampen my energy or temper my excitement. Quite the contrary. I see a ROTC program full of passionate cadets and cadre. I see a level of technical and tactical competence from the cadets that indicates an extraordinary level of dedication and underscores the quality of training that the Cadet Battalion plans and executes. Most importantly is that I see in this program developing leaders.

I want to highlight some of the positive things I have experienced since arriving here. First off, I was welcomed with open arms by the cadre upon my arrival. A big Thank You to MSG Bruce Hutcherson for making my transition as seamless as possible. Secondly, I had the opportunity to participate in my first Cadet Orientation Program (COP) and was highly impressed by the planning and execution of that event by the MS-III and MS-IV Cadets. They put on a first rate event for the incoming freshmen despite a severely condensed planning period. Lastly, I experienced my first college football game with the Army ROTC Color Guard. I can say with confidence that they represented this Battalion, the University, the United States Army, and this country proudly.

I hope that you can see by the tone of my message that I am extremely excited about the opportunity to train with, teach, and learn from the fine leaders in this organization. I will do my part to continue the outstanding legacy of this program, and like to think that we can work together to propel this program to even bigger and better things.



FIGHTING ILLINI!



## Summer Training Highlights

### Cadet Troop Leadership Training: A Taste of Active Duty Life

*By Cadet Jaime Jew*

Over the summer I got to experience Advance Camp in Fort Knox, Kentucky and afterwards participate in the Cadet Troop Leadership Program (CTLT). Basically, once I completed camp, I received orders to travel to Fort Lewis, WA and four days after my graduation at Fort Knox, I was on the west coast for CTLT. I believe my experience was different than the normal assignment of those who went through the program. Initially, I thought I was going to shadow an officer, but this year the Commanding General of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (ID) felt the cadets would learn more lessons by not shadowing a lieutenant but instead lead a platoon.

My sponsor was 1LT Wright, an Ordnance officer in a Forward Support Company in the 1-23 Infantry, 2<sup>nd</sup> ID. As a simultaneous membership program (SMP) cadet with no experience in logistics, I was extremely nervous and excited for this assignment. This was a new world to me and definitely out my comfort zone. But 1LT Wright was a great mentor as he allowed me to develop plans and execute tasks but giving me guidance when needed. I didn't want to let my sponsor down. Logistics and Quartermaster branches were my top choices so I this CTLT assignment was a great learning experience to help me determine if I would like serving in one of these branches. The NCOs in the company and platoon took me under their wing and taught me what I needed to know.

Later, my Company Commander put me in charge of planning and executing their field training exercise (FTX), where I had to plan ruck marches and produce a convoy brief. During my time in Ft. Lewis I met some great leaders and soldiers where I learned valuable lessons from their experiences in the active duty army and in their lives. The members of the company were easy to bond with and it was a sad moment when I left.

Aside from being on post, the weekends were the best time. I remembered a few friends that I went to basic training with that were stationed in Ft. Lewis. I met up with them and they showed me the surrounding cities like Seattle and Tacoma. One of my favorite memories was driving out to the downtown Seattle area and going up to the top of the Space Needle. We also ate freshly caught seafood at the Pike's Place Market. In addition, the post and surrounding area are beautiful. There are plenty of outdoor activities to do such as fishing, biking and hiking up Mt. Rainier. Fort Lewis is a great post to serve at.

*Editor's Note: The Cadet Troop Leadership Training program gives contracted cadets the opportunity to shadow an active duty lieutenant for month. During this time, the cadet gains insight into the tasks junior officers execute, and the expectations and lifestyle of being a platoon leader. Some have the opportunity to lead soldiers in training events.*



**Cadet Jaime Jew** with his sponsor, **1LT Wright**, in front of a Stryker.



# Summer Training Highlights

## My Basic Camp Experience

*By Cadet Jazmin Coco House*

After my first year of ROTC, I had the opportunity to go to Basic Camp to enhance my soldier and leadership skills. For me, there were both highs and lows that I believe the training made me a stronger leader. One of my most memorable experiences was the High Ropes Course. I didn't realize how much I was afraid of heights until I was dangling 70 feet in the air. The first obstacle was a 70-foot tower with rope ladders, intertwined logs, and widely spaced platforms. Every cadet had to maneuver through this course with the help of their battle buddies. Throughout my Basic Camp experience, we enhanced our skills in drill and ceremony, marksmanship, tactics, leadership and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) defense. The CBRN defense training was new for me and I was very scared. During this training we learned how to put on and wear the joint service lightweight integrated suit technology (JSLIST) uniform and protective mask within seconds. Afterwards, every platoon was forced to go into the gas chamber where we were exposed to CS gas. There was only a little bit of a burn until they made us take off our gas mask, jump up and down, while singing "Baby Shark." Once I took my first breathe, I immediately started choking. When we were finally able to exit the chamber we were greeted by extreme burning in our eyes, snot dripping from our noses, and our drill sergeants yelling at us to move along. It was at that very moment when I thought to myself "Why did I join Army ROTC;" but once the pain started to go away, I realized the value of my protective mask and I felt my platoon grew closer as we were proud that we had accomplished this training.



**Cadet Jazmin House** conducts CBRN training with other cadets in the gas chamber.

Although I had many positive experiences, I did experience bad ones also. During the field training exercise (FTX), I became very sick to the point where I was coughing up blood and the senior medic sergeant was convinced I was lying; even though all my cadre witnessed me suffer. He started saying very disrespectful and inappropriate things to me until our Captain came over and explained the situation. She admired my resilience and determination to complete my mission and reminded me that I can learn just as much from poor leaders as good ones. This event shouldn't shape my view of the Army. I also experienced the value of the Equal Opportunity Office when my battle buddy and I were accused by one of the more senior cadets of running around the male cadets' floor when we should have been eating in the dining facility. His story was consistent so our cadre recommended we report this incident to Equal Opportunity (EO). After an investigation, the EO representatives and the regiment's drill sergeants spoke with this Advanced Camp graduate, and he was sent home. This gave me confidence that the Army cares for its own and treats everyone fairly. My Basic Camp experience was truly a learning experience. I would not change what I went through because I think it made me a stronger individually as a leader and I know that I have the strength and determination to make a difference in ROTC and in the future Army.

# Summer Training Highlights

## Fighting Illini Cadets Conquer Advanced Camp

By MS-IV Cadets; Edited by CDT Daniel Lee

All ROTC students must graduate from the 37-day Advanced Camp before their MS-IV year in order to commission. Held at Fort Knox, KY, Advanced Camp tests Cadets' basic soldiering skills such as rifle marksmanship and physical fitness as well their overall potential as future Army Officers through leading a platoon of their peers in multiple missions involving basic infantry tactics. 23 Fighting Illini Cadets conquered Advanced Camp this summer and over the next few pages, here are some of the lessons learned:

### CDT Tucker Petersen– My Advanced Camp Experience

I was assigned to the 11<sup>th</sup> regiment this summer for Advanced Camp. I began my 37-day journey on July 12, 2019. I was fortunate as I had learned many of the practical skills that we had to master at Advanced Camp already during my Infantry One Unit Station Training. The National Guard provided additional training to what is typically covered in Army ROTC. Summer Camp added more pressure because you are constantly being evaluated. The major thing that I was able to develop during my time at Advanced Camp was my leadership capabilities at the different levels of command within a platoon.

This opportunity occurred because I was assigned to all three leadership positions at camp. I had never been a platoon sergeant before coming to camp and the feedback from this experience will stay with me forever. I learned that I focused too much on the assigned task and not on my soldiers. I was able to make a correction to my leadership approach during other leadership positions I received. This constant review, adjust and review again improved my performance and my interaction with my fellow platoon members greatly improved. From watching other cadets' perform in similar roles, I learned that you can't always be the good guy and that sometimes you have to make decisions that no one is going to like. In the end, Advanced Camp really helped develop myself as a more well-rounded and competent leader.

### CDT Terrell Baker– Advanced Camp Experience

As I reflect on my Advanced Camp experience, I realize how much I have developed as an individual during those 37 days at Fort Knox, KY. I have definitely grown very close and learned so much from my Fighting Illini Army ROTC peers. However, having the opportunity to train with other cadets from other ROTC programs made me appreciate even more how well we prepared for Advanced Camp. It was definitely not easy over the past few years, but having the help and encouragement from my classmates and knowing we had each other's back gave me confidence through those long 37 days in the field and in the hot heat of Kentucky. There were times I wanted to just stop and give up, especially having to ruck everywhere we went but I continued to push forward. Building a new team and forming new friendship bonds at camp motivated



Cadet Tucker Petersen with a fellow cadet at graduation



## Summer Training Highlights

### Fighting Illini Cadets Conquer Advanced Camp (Continued)

me every day to keep moving forward. Not only did I meet great people in 7<sup>th</sup> regiment, I was always running into a few of my peers from UIUC. Nine of my peers were assigned to 7th regiment so it was quite common to have a short conversation with a fellow Fighting Illini when coming or going to training. Back at campus now, it is nice being able to describe events to fellow cadets that experienced the exact same training with the same instructors, etc. These were some great memories that I have enjoyed telling to my friends and family. Advanced Camp is an experience of its own; something you are grateful to finally graduate from but also an event you are proud that you accomplished something you never went through before.

#### CDT Jesse Park

As I headed to the airport, I was filled with anxiety and curiosity. I knew the day would come where I would eventually end up in FT. Knox, KY for Cadet Summer Training, and I had dreaded the idea of it. Stress came from knowing that I was going to be evaluated every second I was awake, and the fear of not knowing if I was fully prepared. Yet, I was curious to see who would be in my platoon and what I would learn. After arriving and meeting my squad the following day, I felt more at ease with the environment. As the days went by, my platoon bonded quickly as we realized the best way to pass time was to work as a team and try to enjoy our time there. After the

evaluations of land navigation, the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), buddy team live fire, and rifle qualification, it was soon time to lead tactical missions. Many were worried about their performances and their knowledge, but everyone helped one another when it was needed.

Another observation that motivated me to a successful camp was seeing others I knew. For example, at AO Grizzly, I saw SFC Silva running the ambush lane, and seeing a friendly face helped boost my morale. In between two other missions, I ran into 2LT Alex Rachesky [Commissioned in May 2019]. He lifted my spirits and I seemed recharged. Throughout CST, I received a handful of letters from friends and family, and every day, I would take a look at them to keep me motivated. Graduation day eventually came, and I was surprised how quickly the time flew. The bonds I created with my platoon members are treasured and truthfully, I had great time at camp. If I were to leave advice for cadets who are soon the face FT. Knox, it would be to always keep a positive attitude, offer help, be in the best physical fitness shape you can and be as technically and tactically proficient you can in your basic infantry tasks.



Cadets from the Fighting Illini Army ROTC Battalion who were assigned to 7th Regiment reunite at graduation. Left to Right: Cadets Terrell Baker, Jack Hamman, Nathan Ruxlow, Eugene Ro, Cullen O'Connor, Maritza Palafox, Eddie Thomas, Jesse Park and Timothy Wallace.

# Summer Training Highlights

## Cadet Coalition Warfighter Program (CCWP)

*By Fighting Illini Cadets; Edited by Cadet Daniel Lee*

The Cadet Coalition Warfighter Program (formerly known as the Cultural Understanding and Language Program or CULP) is a program that immerses Cadets in the lifestyle of a foreign military. The primary goal of the program is not only cultural proficiency but also to foster an understanding in how the U.S. military interacts with foreign militaries.

### CDT Cordelia Grob— Mongolia

From May to June 2019, I traveled with a team to Mongolia to experience a new culture and interact with members of the Mongolian Army. During the first week in country, we stayed in the capital, Ulaanbaatar, and visited the National Defense University of Mongolia, the Mongolian equivalent to West Point. We interacted with the Officers, NCOs, and Cadets of the University who were all eager to share their knowledge and love of their military. One day was dedicated to giving presentations on American culture and customs. Another day was spent learning about Mongolian culture and ended with karaoke, a very popular pastime of Mongolia. On the last day of visiting the University, we participated in a Field Training Exercise with the Mongolians.

During the second week, we traveled north of Ulaanbaatar to Darkhan, home of Unit 330, the Mongolian equivalent to a U.S. Army Airborne unit. The soldiers taught us marching, traditional Mongolian games, and how to make dumplings. The last week we were in Mongolia, we trained with UN Peacekeepers at an event called Khan Quest. The Peacekeepers came from all over the world to train in Mongolia. We attended different seminars about crowd control, self-defense, and how to identify improvised explosive devices (IED)s. Many of the instructors were from the Alaskan Army National Guard and U.S. Marines. We intermingled with soldiers from Japan, Thailand, Canada, China, Qatar, Rwanda, United Kingdom, and many more. It was truly a cultural experience. One of the most rewarding parts of the trip was volunteering at a summer camp located in the countryside. The mission of the camp was to provide children that come from poor families an opportunity to experience life away from the city. As a team, we moved dirt and stones to build a road for the maintenance vehicles, dug a volleyball court for the children, and of course, took turns playing games with the kids. Overall, I am very appreciative and grateful that I was able to have this experience. I was able to learn from leaders in different cultures and learn more about a different part of the world.



**Cadet Cordelia Grob** visits a museum dedicated to the history of the Mongolian Army.

## Summer Training Highlights

### Cadet Coalition Warfighter Program (Continued)

#### CDT Joy Kim—Training in Romania

I was blessed with the opportunity to participate in the Army ROTC Cultural & Leadership Program (CULP) in Romania alongside Cadets from all over the United States. My group's mission was to expand our knowledge about an unfamiliar culture by experiencing it firsthand by working directly with Cadets and Soldiers from other countries. This mil-to-mil engagement allowed our group to observe the differences and similarities between the United States military and all three branches of the Romanian military.

One of my favorite aspects about the whole experience was interacting with our Romanian counterparts. We first visited the Naval Academy in Constanta, where we spent a few days bonding and training with the Cadets. They gave us a tour of the school and allowed us to experience a small portion of their life as a Cadet, which included physical training, sailing, navigating and driving a boat in a simulator. During our leisure time, some of the Romanian Cadets joined us for dinners, provided us city tours, and we even had a trip to the beach on the coast of the Black Sea.

In the following weeks, we visited the Air Force Academy in Brasov, as well as the Land Forces Academy in Sibiu. Although our visits to those academies were much shorter, we still established strong connections with their Cadets by interacting with them and exploring these major cities.

During the days we did not interact with the Romanians, my CULP group toured many museums, monasteries, fortresses, and we hiked every opportunity we could. Through visiting each of these places, I was able to learn what Romanian culture is really like, as well as how their history impacts the people's lives and the government today.

I am extremely grateful for my experience in Romania. Being in a country that is a fairly new member of NATO, I sensed a greater value of our visit than just seeing a part of the world I hadn't seen before. Before this trip I knew very little about Romania but I truly enjoyed being in a lesser-known country for a month. It was amazing for me to step out of my comfort zone by living in a foreign country. But because I did, I learned about the importance of cross-cultural competencies and gained a better understanding on what it takes to work with allied countries.



**Cadet Joy Kim** poses for a photo alongside a Romanian Naval Cadet and fellow Army ROTC Cadets.



# Summer Training Highlights

## Cadet Coalition Warfighter Program (Continued)

### CDT Mason Potts—Guatemala City, Guatemala

Once we had landed in Guatemala it was immediately evident that the culture in this country would be much different than Illinois. The vehicles used, the building structures, and the way in which people greeted one another quickly came to my attention. The first few days in Guatemala City resembled a city back in the United States with extravagant hotels and business centers spread throughout. Looking closer however, I saw small shops and people in the streets selling anything and everything that was of value to make a living.

At Escuela Politecnica, the Guatemalan Cadets demonstrated their discipline by marching in formation and their respect for a higher ranking cadet or one of their officers. One of our tasks was to learn their language (Spanish). I found their classes very beneficial and I found myself learning very quickly due to the daily immersion of the language. As my Spanish improved, I was able to make friends with cadets from Guatemala much more easily.

In the city of Antigua, the Spanish influence was very evident with the way the city looked and felt. Their churches were constructed in a fashion with elaborate arches, steeples, and staircase formations. In terms of the people, all of those which we met were kind and had very positive attitudes. This mindset was very evident when in climbing volcano Pacaya, someone asked a man why do they stay with the possibility of being killed by the volcano. His answer was simply that he had no where else to go and he was born there. Each person lives in the moment not knowing whether or not they could get another due to the he looming shadow of Pacaya.

When at Lake Atitlán, the Mayan and Spanish culture was infused within the people that lived near. Especially in the religion of the people. They worship within Catholic Churches yet there are Mayan gods and African shamans in the same church. This syncretism is widely accepted by the people even though it is looked down upon by Rome as being sacrilegious and their faith isn't pure. During our service trips I learned a lot about how small acts of kindness can go a long way with the people being helped. When repainting the high school, I was impressed by how many of the students came to help and their enthusiasm. All were eager to test their English and learn more about us and the United States. We also visited an orphanage where we were able to speak with the kids and improve their building by repainting it. This provided an opportunity to foster a great relationship with the community. All in all I learned a lot from my time in Guatemala and wouldn't trade my experience for anything. I know from the friendships made and time spent in Guatemala, I have improved as a leader; becoming more versatile and adaptable to people of all backgrounds.



**Cadet Mason Potts** poses for a photo with his fellow ROTC and Guatemalan Cadets

# Summer Training Highlights

## Cadet Coalition Warfighter Program (Continued)

### CDT Roy Kim– Training with Nepalese military

In the summer of 2019, I was given the opportunity to be part of the Army’s Cadet Coalition Warfighting Program (CCWP) to Nepal. I was on one of three teams that went to Nepal to work with the local population and Nepalese military to better understand our peers on a military and cultural scale.

CCWP was broken down into three separate weeks with a separate focus each week. For my team the order was Military-to-Military interaction, Community Outreach, and Cultural Understanding. In the first week, my team and I had the privilege of going to the Nepalese Military Academy, equivalent to our West Point, to train with their Cadets. We did physical exercise together, learned about their training curriculum, and saw what the everyday life of one of their Cadets looked like. It was an extremely gratifying experience working with those from a completely different country but still had the same heart to serve. One thing that struck me was how the Nepalese military is not an active warfighting military. Their military’s main focuses are upon countering domestic terrorism as well as disaster relief. While their priorities and actions were different, their dedication to their country and their way-of-life remained the same.



**Cadet Roy Kim** visits one of the many temples located in the Kathmandu, Nepal.

The second week’s focus was Community Outreach. My team headed to Damauli, the headquarters town in the Tanuhun district. This small town was unique in that it was carefully constructed from the ground up in an organized way. The entire city was built with clear systematically placed pattern. In many ways it was an ideal town that showed what Nepal could be in several years. With clean streets and a bustling population. There we were able to help build up local schools and explore the beauty of Nepal. One tribe of all women lived in the “hills” of Nepal and remained very in touch with their traditional Nepalese cultural norms. It was amazing to see a little slice of history of a rapidly modernizing world.

Our last week of Nepal was Cultural Understanding. This week was filled with visits to local temples, cultural sites, and talks from prominent Nepalese figures, from retired Generals to the Chief of Police. It was amazing to see how religious roots heavily impacted what Nepal is today. Temples were scattered throughout the entirety of Kathmandu, Nepal’s capital, and were focal points for the population to center around. It was not uncommon to see hundreds of both locals and tourists crowding the local temples to appreciate both history and religion. Overall my experience in Nepal was amazing, an opportunity I would have never been able to have without the Army. I am eternally grateful for this opportunity and amazed at the kindness and hospitality of the people of Nepal.

# Summer Training Highlights

## Cadet Coalition Warfighter Program (Continued)

### CDT Nathan Ruxlow– Training with the Argentinean Military

This summer I was given the amazing opportunity to attend a Cultural Understanding & Leadership Program (CULP) mission to the South American country of Argentina with a team of cadre and other cadets. Our mission was to become more culturally aware of another country and adapt to an unfamiliar culture through immersion into the host nation. This was accomplished through military-to-military exchanges and social, cultural, and historical education.

My team was in country for twenty-three days; we spent ten days at El Colegio Militar de la Nación (Argentine National Military College), a week in the city of Buenos Aires, and a week at Escuela Militar de Montaña (the mountain warfare school) in Bariloche. During our time at the military college, we got to attend the Argentine Army Day with multiple Argentine Army units, Argentina's President, and officers of many South American countries present, visit multiple military schools and units including an Air Assault unit, infantry unit, the Peace Operations Joint Training Center, and other historic units, tour and spend the day with the Calvary and Engineering cadets, learn traditional Argentine dance, and exchange in day-to-day activities with their cadets.

While staying in Buenos Aires we experienced multiple cultural and historical activities by touring the city and visiting historic buildings, the US Embassy, and other governmental buildings. We also had the opportunity to enjoy traditional Argentine meals, attend a tango show and ballet, and exploring shops, parks, and monuments. The trip to the mountain warfare school required flying to Bariloche in the Andes Mountains. At this unique area, we got to tour the mountain warfare school, see some beautiful mountain ranges, try the amazing regional cuisine, and explore the city of Bariloche. It was also here that I was given the honor of accepting a coin from the commander of the Argentine Mountain Warfare school.

This mission improved my leadership capabilities and experience tremendously. I was able to expand my cultural awareness and enhance my language skills, build a foundation for cultural adaptability, and greatly expand my network of new friends (both US and Argentine cadets). Meeting several present and future Argentine officers may benefit me should I cross paths with one of these leaders some point in my career. I am extremely grateful for being part of the Cadet Coalition Warfighter Program and feel this trip was one of the most rewarding things I have done in my time as a student and cadet.



Cadet Nathan Ruxlow poses for a photo with an Argentinean cadet.



# Summer Training Highlights

## My Air Assault Experience

*By Cadet Jack Hamman*



**Cadet Jack Hamman** proudly displays his graduation certificate with his roommate.

This summer I had the opportunity to attend The Sabalauski Air Assault school at Fort Campbell, KY. I arrived with several other cadets and you could sense the aura of nervousness and excitement in the air. We were all motivated to attend the school we had heard so much about but were also concerned with the ever-looming possibility of being dropped from the course. The day before our start date, we checked our gear repeatedly to make sure we had everything on the packing list, fearing even one missing item could put us on a flight back to our university.

Day zero, the first day which decides whether you are admitted as an Air Assault Student, began quickly. We in-processed and went straight into a two-mile run in full uniform. After passing the two-mile run requirement, we immediately went to the confidence course and was tasked with completing every obstacle on the course. Worn out, I completed my final obstacle and successfully earned a spot as an Air Assault student in Class 28-19.

The course started off with us learning the different specifications of the Army rotary wing aircraft and the operations they performed. The next phase of training was handling sling loads. My fellow classmates and I spent hours running through the meticulous sequences of each of the loads that we were asked to learn. After the sling loads test, we finished the course with the third and final phase which focused on rappelling from helicopters. Each phase brought unique challenges that we tackled together as a class to ensure we were all prepared for each test given to us. On the final day of the course, we had one last daunting task to complete; the 12-mile ruck march. After hearing stories about students who had to repeat the course again because of missing a single item after the 12-miler, we triple checked all our gear the night before the ruck. We woke up at 0130 and reaching the start line at 0330, the excitement and nerves returned from day one. It was the last hurdle of the course and I didn't want to trip over it. At exactly 3:30 am, there was a thunderous "Go!" and we were off. My roommate and I pushed each other through the entire ruck march. We were constantly trying to pass each other for bragging rights that would be levied over the last four hours we would spend together at Fort Campbell. Coming down to the final 400 meters of our ruck, we both took off in a dead sprint, expending every ounce of energy we had. My roommate ended up crossed the line milliseconds before me forcing me to bear an earful of smack talk.

I had successfully completed the course. I was relieved but I then realized that completing the ruck with my newfound colleague was the best part of this experience. Getting to know the other cadets, soldiers, and officers during this tough training created connections that were even more valuable than the actual training I received. I believe these relationships would continue throughout my career. Overall, Air Assault School was a great experience and I am glad I had the opportunity to interact with so many motivated and exceptional people during the course. I cannot wait to continue to foster these connections made and could not thank the Fighting Illini Battalion enough for the opportunity to attend the Sabalauski Air Assault school.

# Summer Training Highlights

## My Air Assault School Experience

By Cadet Cullen O'Connor

### Cadet Cullen O'Connor's Experience

This past year, I was fortunate enough to be selected for one of the air assault slots from the 3rd ROTC Brigade. Being selected was quite an honor as I was competing against cadets from 41 universities. The course starting on August 12 and I went through the intensive 10-day course offered at the Sabalauski Air Assault School (TSAAS), "Home of the 101st Airborne Division" at Fort Campbell. Our class began with 260 personnel and ended with only 117 on graduation day.

TSAAS started off with the infamous "Day 0", which included a 2 mile run followed by a standard obstacle course. The 6-mile ruck took place the next morning on Day 1, and after completion of the ruck, we began Phase I. Phase I consisted of basic helicopter knowledge, and I was taught aspects of pathfinder, aeromedical, and air assault operations. I was taught how to establish Helicopter Landing Zones (HLZs) and the basic statistics of rotary-wing aircraft, such as the top air speeds, maximum weights, and available munitions. This phase concluded with a 50-question multiple choice exam and a helicopter arm-signal practice test, both needing a 70% or higher to pass. After passing, I moved right into sling-load operations.

Phase II, sling load operations, was by far the most stressful part of the school. Attention to detail was everything. Our phase test consisted of running through four different sling loads, and catching at least 3/4 of the deficiencies on the rigging. It required a steady, rock-solid sequence when working around the sling load and a high degree of trust in your training.



**Cadet Cullen O'Connor** poses for a photo next to the revered "Screaming Eagles", which is the unit insignia of the 101st Airborne Division.



We ran through the sequences so many times throughout the day prior to the test that when I closed my eyes to go to sleep at night, all I could think about was every piece of equipment on those loads. Instructors did their best to hide the deficiencies, and Phase II testing removed a large portion of students from the course.



## Summer Training Highlights

### My Air Assault School Experience (Continued)

Phase III was the best part: rappelling. It began by tying swiss seat after swiss seat until our hips bruised and sometimes bled. We learned rappelling techniques, such as how to safely clip in, how to bound, and how to belay. Our class mastered the three types of rappels: Hollywood, Hollywood lock-in, and combat. Combat was the best, but also the most uncomfortable. We had to rappel off the open side of the tower, loaded up with body armor, helmet, rifle, and rucksack. I was weighing close to 275 lbs., and I felt every bit of it in my swiss seat. The last event was the grueling 12-mile foot march. We stepped off at 0330, and moved for another two and a half hours. I was passing those who had experienced major body cramps, dehydration, and those who had just given up. I sweated enough that morning to fill my canteen 10 times over. Preparation and sustenance was crucial. Those who failed to prepare were the ones doubled over on the side of the road, not being able to move without experiencing severe cramps. An ambulance had to be called for one student who fell only 100 feet within the finish line.



Cadet Cullen O'Connor and his fellow graduates proudly display their graduation certificates and Air Assault badges.



An Air Assault Instructor demonstrates his confidence in his belay man by letting go of his rappelling ropes.

I was lucky enough to have passed every phase as a first time go. The school tested some limits, but it was just as easy not to fail as it was to fail. I was given plenty of time to prepare, study, and recover. The instructors were there to help you, and they wanted to see everyone pass. If you wanted those wings, you we're getting them. I'm extremely blessed to have gotten that opportunity, and I'm ready to use what I learned to get things started this Fall semester.



*Editor's Note: The competition this summer was tough. To be selected, a cadet had to achieve a maximum score on the Army Physical Fitness Test and demonstrate a mental toughness that he/she wouldn't quit when the training got difficult. The two Fighting Illini Battalion Cadets, Cullen O'Connor and Jack Hamman, had what it takes to earn the coveted Air Assault Wings from the US Army Air Assault School at Fort Benning, GA.*



# Summer Training Highlights

## Army Science Board Internship

By Cadet Timothy Song

There are plenty of opportunities to participate in summer military training if you are willing to try something new. One of these unique training programs offered this summer to Cadets in the Fighting Illini Army ROTC Battalion was an Army Internships. Although not as physically demanding as Airborne School or Air Assault School, cadets can compete for one of the Army internships during their MS-I, MS-II and MS-III years. These internships range from doing research at Department of Defense labs to supporting the Army Corps of Engineers. The internships offered encompass a wide variety of disciplines and majors. I was excited when I learned I was selected for one of these internships this summer.

After the 37-day long Army ROTC Advanced Camp, I was able to take part in the Army Science Board Internship. The Army Science Board (ASB), which is organized under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) of 1977, provides the Army with independent advice and recommendations on matters relating to the Army's scientific, technological, manufacturing, logistics and business management functions, as well as other matters the Secretary of the Army deems important to the Army. My assignment was to work as part of a team with other ROTC and West Point Cadets to develop a brief with a recommendation on how the Army can better recruit today's generation of Soldiers. My research team focused on how the Army can better digitally recruit using social media as well as microtargeting and deep linking methods to reach today's technology focused society. In our

research efforts, we used multiple internet sources, visited a recruiting station in Santa Ana, the Los Angeles Virtual Recruiting Battalion, and the RAND Corporation to fully find our observations and findings. At the end of the internship, we were given the opportunity to brief to Army senior leaders on how the Army can better their recruitment effort digitally. This internship was split into two locations. The first location was in the Beckman Center of the National Academies of Sciences & Engineering, California In California, where we briefed our findings to some of the Army senior leaders, the Honorable Dr. Casey Wardynski (Assistant Secretary of the Army) and LTG Thomas Seamands (the Army G-1). The second location was at the Pentagon, in Washington D.C., where we presented to Secretary of the Army Ryan D. McCarthy and LTG Theodore Martin (Deputy Commanding General/Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command). As we met these senior leaders and many other ASB members and generals, we gained a lot of insight into the workings of the Army and leadership lessons.

Overall, this internship was the best thing that has happened to me so far in the Army. I was able to meet some of the brightest minds in the United States that support the U.S. Army and discuss with them some of the issues facing the Army. Everyone was willing to discuss their views on leadership and their experiences in the military so I left believing I could become a good leader no matter where the Army sends me.



**Cadet Timothy Song** briefs high ranking civilian and military officials, including the Secretary of the Army, at the Pentagon on his research finding.

# Summer Training Highlights

## Army Mountain Warfare School

*By Cadet Thomas Easton*

I am honored and privileged that I had opportunity to attend the basic Army Mountain Warfare School from August 10th to 23rd. The school is nestled in the mountains near Burlington, VT on a small National Guard outpost named Camp Ethan Allen. I arrived there on Aug. 10 with 64 other students coming from all the components of the Army. On the first day we were organized into 4 Squads with 16 people per squad and the most senior NCO acting as the Squad Leader. All the students immediately noticed that the skills we would be tested in the course were posted on the wall outside our bunks. Each test broke down the exact details that would be examined during these tests. How well you learned these details would determine whether we would pass or fail. So there was no reason for any student not to know what was expected on the tests. After the first day our introduction into training began.

There weren't official phases of training; rather, the training was chronologically organized. The first few days consisted of a lot of classroom instruction. The Instructors taught us the basics of mountaineering and rappelling, Land navigation in high altitude terrain, knots used to create climbing systems with ropes, how to use winter survival gear, and mountain warfare operations and tactics. Everything that we learned in the classroom we would eventually be tested on whether it be a practical exercise or a written exam. We were tested on our Land navigation in the mountains. The standard was finding 4 of 5 points. Next we took the knot test where we were tested on various knots that we needed to know for the systems we would use later on.

The most stressful test for me personally was when we had a set time to tie certain knots. The standard was to tie the knot correctly and state the purpose under the time limit given. The systems that we were tested on included a hasty rappel, fixed line, hauling system, casevac and highline. Each system is used in specific situations to help move gear or personnel in vertical terrain. Our final training was a 2-day field training exercise where our squad was given missions that required us to use the systems we learned to navigate the terrain and work as a team.

The graduation ceremony was on our final day. We each received a Ram's head badge to pin on our uniform which is the official pin that students receive upon completing the basic Mountain Warfare School. I learned so much here but the primary reason why I loved it here was because everything we learned was very practical. If you ever plan on operating in vertical terrain whether in a military setting or just climbing for fun on vacation I highly recommend coming to this school. Army Mountain Warfare School is not a school that is commonly available to all soldiers, so I recommend to anyone that if they have a choice or opportunity to go to absolutely do it. I promise that you will not regret it.



**Cadet Thomas Easton** proudly presents his Rams Head Badge and graduation certificate on graduation day.



**Cadet Easton** poses for a photo with his Basic Military Mountaineering Course instructors and fellow students in front of the Vermont mountains.



## Summer Training Highlight

### Fighting Illini Battalion Looks Ahead to an Event-Filled Semester

*By Cadet Battalion Commander Timothy Wallace*

With over a century and a half of history behind it, the Fighting Illini Battalion will enter a new era in its history. The welcoming of the Battalion's new Professor of Military Science is also accompanied by the welcoming of several new instructors and cadre members. The cadets and cadre of the Battalion are poised to ensure the transition continues on its smooth course through the fall semester and beyond.

The first event of the year is the Battalion's Cadet Orientation Program (COP). This four-day event welcomes our incoming freshman cadets and serves as their first introduction to the Army ROTC Program. While certainly rigorous, COP establishes camaraderie among the new freshman class and provides them with the basic soldiering skills they need to be successful in our organization. These activities include conducting Physical Readiness Training (PRT), Basic Rifle Marksmanship (BRM) with air rifles, Drill and Ceremony and the Field Leader's Reaction Course.

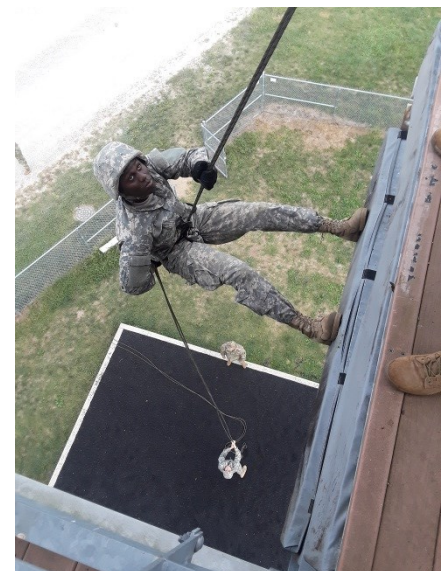
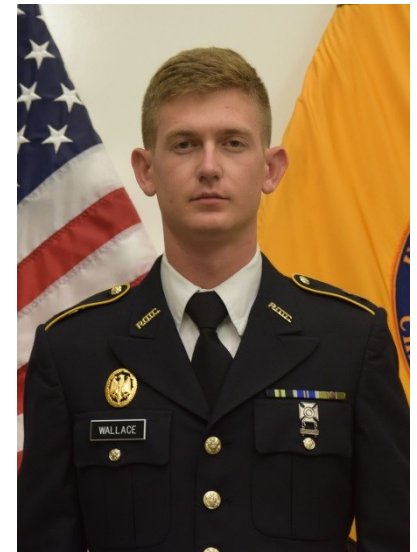
Following COP, the Battalion jumps into training for the semester with the Fall Field Training Exercise (FTX) in close sight. As the primary training event of the semester, the Fall FTX is meant to give cadets a chance to hone their basic soldiering skills and develop their leadership skills on a military installation for four days. Located at Camp Atterbury, cadets are taught military land navigation skills using the very basics - a compass, a protractor and a map. Other Fall FTX events include introducing Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC), learning individual movement techniques, going through the Field Leadership Reaction Course, Confidence Course and culminating with rappelling. Meanwhile, PRT is conditioning cadets for the rigors of the military lifestyle.

Throughout the semester, cadets will train, participate in our many outstanding clubs, and represent the Battalion on campus in various events. Cadets have the opportunity to participate in clubs that prepare them for events such as Ranger Challenge Competition and the Norwegian

Ruck Foot March. Of course the Rifle Club and the Push-Up Crew at home football games are active during the fall semester. This fall, the Fighting Illini Battalion will undoubtedly continue its tradition of excellence.



New cadets participate in a tug-of-war with a HMMWV during COP.



Cadet Marshall Yenou listens to instructions on the helicopter rappelling platform.

**FIGHTING ILLINI!!**



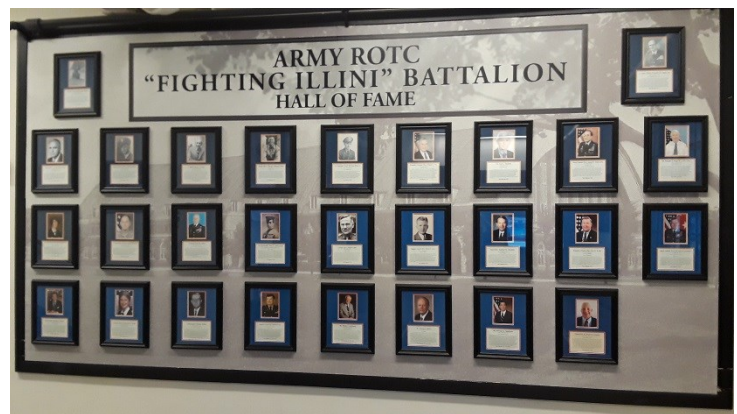
# A Request for Alumni Support

## Request for Funding of the Hall of Fame Display

*By Mr. Eric Ashworth, Alumni Outreach*

One of the unique displays of the Armory Building in the Army ROTC Alumni Hall of Fame Board. The board displays all 27 of our current members in our Hall of Fame with a photo and short biography. Sadly, we are about to run out of room (see photo below) as we have only one more space before our wall is full. We have an upcoming board in October to induct new members in December and it is our belief that with the latest group of nominations, we will induct more than one new member.

Over the summer, we went to the university to request more wall space and with the Armory being in the middle of a renovation project, we were politely informed that no new space was available. Especially on the main floor of the Armory Building which was our preferred location for a new board. After several meetings to find a solution, it was recommended that the Army ROTC Department purchase a “touch-screen” display that would digitally hold all the biographies and accomplishments of our Hall of Fame members. If this was done, we would never need additional wall space. The touch-screen display would be permanently mounted near the current board and would digitally house all photos and biographies of all of our members. The current board would then display the latest 25-30 inducted members with framed photographs.



The current Army ROTC Hall of Fame Board near the SE entrance of the Armory Building

This recommendation was offered to us without a willingness to fund this project. The Army ROTC Department would be required to purchase it with our university funds. With the amount of money we receive each year from the university this would take us a few years to collect the needed funds and it would reduce our ability to fund current cadet training opportunities. Therefore we are notifying our readers of this need in the hope that some of you would consider donating to this



2013-14 Induction Ceremony

project and we can continue to display all the members that have earned the right to be considered part of the Fighting Illini Army ROTC Hall of Fame. If this is something you would be interested in supporting, please contact me at [eashwort@illinois.edu](mailto:eashwort@illinois.edu) for more details. Thanks for any consideration you give to this matter.



Fighting Illini Army ROTC Hall of Fame Medal

# Upcoming Events and Transitions

## The Army ROTC Department's 2019 Fall Semester Events

By MAJ Daniel Johnson

**18 OCT 19: University of Illinois Homecoming Parade:** The Fighting Illini Battalion will proudly march in the University's Homecoming parade.

**02 NOV 19: Salute to Veterans Football Game / Alumni Tailgate (Dad's Weekend):** The University will host a Salute to Veterans during the Fighting Illini's home game against Rutgers. During this game, the Fighting Illini Battalion, along with the Chez Veterans Center, will conduct a joint Tail Gate in Grange Grove, which is open to all ROTC Alumni and Illini Veterans. Additionally, the University is offering **two free tickets** to every Veteran interested in attending the game. Please send us a note at [arotc@illinois.edu](mailto:arotc@illinois.edu) if you would like to attend the game and we will send you the link to receive your two free tickets.

The University is also offering discounted tickets if you need more than two tickets. Finally, the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics (DIA) is looking for videos (~30 secs) of alumni referencing their UIUC & military experience or pictures of alumni in uniform with a caption to go along with the photo. The stadium events coordinator will play the videos and display the pictures on the Jumbo-Tron throughout the game. Please send photos and videos to [arotc@illinois.edu](mailto:arotc@illinois.edu) and we will get them to DIA. As you can see, this will be a fun event. We hope to see you at the tailgate and game!



New Contracted Cadets Say the Loyalty Oath at last fall's Salute to Veterans Football Game at

**22-23 NOV 19: German Armed Forces Military Proficiency Badge Event (GAFMPB):** Approximately 10 Fighting Illini Cadets will travel to Western Illinois University and compete to earn a Gold, Silver, or Bronze GAFMPB. This event is hosted by sanctioned by a current German Army officer. If the Cadets meet the standards, they will earn the right to proudly display their first foreign award on their dress uniforms.

**06 DEC 19: Army & Air Force Dining Out / Army ROTC Hall of Fame Ceremony:** We will partner with our Air Force brethren at the Round Barn in Champaign in order to enjoy a formal night of military traditions. Prior to the Dining Out, the Fighting Illini Battalion will induct members into its storied program into the Alumni Hall of Fame. Please let us know if you are interested in attending the Dining Out and/or Hall of Fame Ceremony.



Three of our Hall of Fame Members at the 2018 Dining Out

### Fall Semester 2019 Transition: Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT)

As most of you know, the Army is transitioning from the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) to the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) this year. The ACFT will be the Army's fitness test for record beginning on 01 OCT 2020. The concept behind the ACFT is to not only increase a Soldier's physical readiness, but to also cultivate a culture of fitness within the Army. The events of the ACFT mimic movements that a Soldier would most likely execute during combat operations. The Battalion will start executing the ACFT (diagnostic) this year. Currently we have limited equipment on hand and limited access to venues with the necessary equipment. Even with this handicap, the Cadets will creatively find ways to train for the ACFT and simultaneously improve every Cadet's physical readiness.



# Support The Fighting Illini Battalion

University of  
Illinois Foundation

Recruiting, Donations  
Visits, Expertise

**Upcoming Calendar:** If you do not feel you can assist financially with the purchase of the touch-screen display for the Hall of Fame Board, there are other ways alumni can support the Cadet Battalion. Please consider supporting one of these upcoming events:

- Veterans Day Football Game. As discussed on page 22, the Army ROTC Battalion conducts a “Loyalty Oath” Ceremony during the Salute to Veterans Football Game against Rutgers. This is a great retention event for the cadets. This year we partnered with the Chez Veteran Center to include a pre-game tailgate party. This tailgate party is a great means to talk to current cadets and share some of your military experiences. Also, there are discounted tickets for all veterans.
- Guest Speaker for any Military Science class. Each year, alumni speak to specific military science classes on their military experience. If you would like to speak to current cadets, please let us know the topic and the time you are available so that we can coordinate for you to be a guest speaker in one or more of our classes.
- The Fighting Illini Dining-Out: On Friday, December 6th, the Cadet Battalion will hold their annual Dining-Out. This formal event educates the cadets on some of the protocols of the Army. This is a great way to meet some of the current cadets as you will be seated with 4-5 of the cadets and their dates. The cost is typically about \$25/person.
- Donate to the Army ROTC Operations or Endowment Fund. If you are not able to make it back to campus, we also appreciate those who donate to the **Army ROTC Cadet Endowment Fund** (11774561) or the **Army ROTC Alumni Fund** (11330418) through the University of Illinois Foundation. Donations help fund current cadets with the costs associated in participating in events not covered by the U.S. Army funding. Our ability to attend Ranger Buddy, the Bataan Memorial Ruck March, the Scabbard and Blade Honor Society, and the Norwegian Ruck March are possible thanks to donations we receive each year.

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**\*\* Photos on Back Cover: top: Cadet Battalion formation for the 9-11 Memorial Observance; lower left: Cadet Nathan Ruxlow at the Argentina Military College; lower right: Cadet Jaime Jew in front of a Stryker at Fort Lewis.**



# THE FIGHTING ILLINI ARMY ROTC



## FORGING STRONG LEADERS SINCE 1868

